

Walking the Path:

Thoughts of a Real-life Jedi

By Streen
2008

There is no emotion, there is peace.
There is no ignorance, there is knowledge.
There is no passion, there is serenity.
There is no chaos, there is harmony.
There is no death, there is the Force.

—The Jedi Code

“The Jedi are a noble order of protectors, guardians of peace and justice, unified by their belief and observance of the Force. They are individuals who actively work to improve their own lives and the lives of those around them every day.”

— JediOnline.org

INTRODUCTION

The online Jedi community came into being in 1997, taking its first form as a role-playing based system in Star Wars chat rooms. Lessons learned from the Star Wars movies as well as many Eastern philosophies were passed from one Jedi to the next. Slowly but surely, word spread that there were people in the world who took a realist approach to the concept of the Force, as described in the films.

Jumping ahead 11 years to the present, the Jedi community thrives at various websites, where people from all over the world study the ways of the

Force. Jedi “gatherings” are a regular occurrence in the US now, and have been arranged for fellow Jedi Realists to meet face to face.

I have spent the past decade exploring the Force and its many aspects, and many religions of the world, particularly Taoism, which is interestingly similar to the Jedi beliefs.

Though forever a student, I am also a teacher of the Jedi ways. What you see here is the culmination of my experiences as a Jedi, and the knowledge I have acquired. What you'll read are the lessons I myself have learned over the past 11 years, simplified and condensed so as to provide an easy way of passing on those lessons.

What most people assume is that the Jedi are a religion or a cult. In some circles that may be the case, that they follow a strict set of beliefs. In general, however, all Jedi have their own belief system. This individuality is something that has actually strengthened the Jedi community, for every person is given the freedom to believe as they choose, while following the common belief that we are all one with the Force. Therefore our individuality becomes the source of our unity.

The Force is real. The Jedi are real. And we are here to help.

May the Force be with you...

CHAPTER 1: FEELING THE FORCE

Most people, upon hearing that there are people who believe in the Force, would ask for proof. That's actually very simple. Obi-wan Kenobi describes the Force as an energy field that permeates all things. Ask any scientist what we are made of at an atomic level, and he or she will say “Energy”. All physical objects, alive or otherwise, are made of energy.

Luke Skywalker's teachers, Obi-wan and Yoda, both speak about “feeling” the Force. This chapter is designed to provide you with proof that the Force does exist, and that it is currently flowing through your body right now. The 7 steps I've designed to feel the Force have a basis in Taoist “chi” exercises, and have been tested by many Jedi, and most, if not all, have successfully felt the Force course through their body.

Step 1: Comprehension

The first step in learning to feel the Force is understanding what exactly you are about to do. The Force is something that is always in you, and you can, by force of will, move it in different directions through your body. The feeling itself can be described as a rush, or more to the point, like falling in love. You will feel light. You might say, you feel “enlightened”. The method is about raising energy up through you, and therefore raising your senses to a higher level.

Step 2: Breathing

Breathing is important in many spiritual endeavors. Martial arts, meditation, etc. Here you will apply breathing to filling yourself with energy.

First, sit comfortably, with your back straight and perpendicular to the floor. Rest your hands in your lap, one cupped inside the other. Now, taking deep breaths, inhale through your nose and imagine light and energy flowing into you and filling you up. Exhale out your mouth and imagine darkness or empty space coming out of you.

Repeat that step until you can see in your mind's eye that your body is filled with light energy.

Step 3: Focus

Imagine all the energy that has filled your body starting to gravitate toward the base of your spine. See it collect there and concentrate itself into a small point of focused energy. Take as much time as you need to do this step and the one before it.

Step 4: Elevation

Allow the point of energy to begin rising up through your body along your spine. This is where the feeling of flowing energy will manifest itself. As it travels up through you, you may begin to have a sense of elation. If not, take your time, repeating the first 3 steps. You may not feel anything yet, but with practice you will.

Step 5: Release

The energy will rise to the top of your head. Next you must allow it to break free from your body. Allow the energy to flow out of you, like a river fed by the point of energy at the base of your spine. Also allow that point of energy to be fed by the Force around you, so that an infinite continuous stream of energy is flowing up through you and out.

Step 6: Relaxation

By now, if you have been successful, you will understand why I described it as feeling like falling in love. Now that you have achieved this feeling, it's time to relax and let go of it.

Allow the flow of the energy to slow, gradually. Take deep breaths. Allow the flow to stop. Move your body a little at a time. Because the experience can sometimes be so powerful, moving too quickly can be disorienting. Allow yourself to ease out of the experience, getting up only when you feel normal again.

Step 7: Practice

You may or may not have been successful in feeling the Force. Most are able to feel something on their first try, but for some, including myself, it took many practice sessions before being able to truly feel the rush. In time, you may even have the ability to experience this flow at will, even during daily activities.

CHAPTER 2: Understanding the Force

The Force is a powerful ally. It is a part of everything. You can never be separate from it, nor can it ever abandon you. It is this nature of the Force that tells us that everything we do comes from it. It is the source of all things. Apart from it you can do nothing.

The Force, if anything, should bring us closer together, instead of individualizing us. For far too long the Jedi have learned to rely only on themselves. This I feel is a result of having a vast number of people seeking knowledge, and not enough people teaching. People have been forced to train themselves, which is necessary at a certain point, but it has created the misconception that we have to do it on our own. Unfortunately this can't be avoided right now. But it's not too late to learn that we should rely upon each other, upon the Force that unites us. Our strength as Jedi is not in that we can handle situations on our own, but in the fact that we all believe in the Force and its power. The goal then is not to have power over others, but power with each other.

It is therefore important to realize that you must rely fully on the Force for everything in order to be successful in what you do. It is when we begin to think that we can do things all on our own that we run into trouble. Everything we have, everything we've accomplished, comes from the Force, and so you must never boast as though you have done something on your own. This is the foundation of humility.

The dictionary defines humility as the quality or condition of being humble, having a modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance, rank, etc. To be humble is not necessarily about thinking less of yourself, but rather in knowing how your progress could continue on infinitely, and thus seeing that while you may have learned a great deal already, there is still so much more wisdom to gain.

Wisdom is knowing that you don't know, that the Force is far greater than any conceptualization we might attempt to place on it. One should be humble, knowing that there is always more to learn, always more to see, to gain, to achieve. Living in this manner, you avoid the dangers of pride, of being over confident, and in turn avoid failure in a situation that you may not have been ready for.

Humility also stems from the idea of being dependent on the Force for

everything. Believing you can do everything on your own is not simply incorrect, it can also be dangerous and draining. Rely, then, on the Force for everything. Allow it to be the fuel that burns indefinitely within you. A never ending light shining on everyone and everything around you. Realize that this light comes from the Force and not from your own will.

Know that the road ahead of you goes on forever, that everything you do comes from the Force, and you will have humility.

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The Force should be seen as all-encompassing, including all things and all concepts. The fact is, our minds cannot comprehend it in its totality. Therefore any attempt we make at trying to explain it or describe it, ultimately is a lie. Lao Tzu said that the Tao that can be named is not the true Tao. It is impossible to know it simply by discussing it. It can only be experienced.

I personally see the Force as the unity of all religious concepts. It is the Tao, Chi, God, Buddha, Allah, etc. They are all one, all the same, but seen from many different perspectives. Whatever one chooses to call it, the most important thing to remember is Unity. As Jedi we must seek unity for the sake of peace. When one sees a situation—any situation—from a perspective of unity, there is always a solution.

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The Force *is* Unity. It represents connection to all things and all people. The greater your understanding of this, the greater a Jedi you will be.

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If you are not attached to any one thing, then you are not discriminating, and can then be united with everything.

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By putting others first, you acknowledge their unity with you. What you do to others you do to yourself. To understand this, to live it, is to be enlightened.

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If there is a first thing to learn as a Jedi, it is Unity. Many religions divide people. Others bring them together, though there are few. We are all connected, all one. The realization of that fact is the solution to any problem. My friend Relan used to say, "Unity is the key". What we do to others, we do to ourselves. What we give to others, we give to ourselves. There is no more important truth. It is the truth that can ultimately save this world.

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It is said that the Force is like a circle, whose circumference is nowhere, and whose center is everywhere.

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It's sometimes stated that the Force can be divided into 3 categories: the Living Force, the Personal Force, and the Universal Force. While there is reason behind defining different aspects of the Force, I think it to be a mistake to believe those aspects are separate from each other.

The Living, Personal, and Universal Force are all one in the same. What these titles describe are different ways the Force manifests itself. Ultimately, they all come from the same place anyway, the Force itself.

My point then, is that with all the separation, discrimination, and disunity in the world, the last thing we need, philosophically, is more division.

One might compare these forms of the Force to the Tao and Chi. Some eastern philosophies separate the two. The Tao is the source from which all things are created, and Chi is the energy flowing through our bodies. But are they separate? I don't believe so. I feel that they are manifested simultaneously. I feel that they are one, just as we all are one.

So while it is useful to understand the different facets of the Force, they shouldn't be seen as different forces in themselves.

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The nature of the Force is simplicity. As thinking human beings we tend to create complexities where there should be none.

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To live in simplicity one must let go of concepts of separation. One must also desire to understand the straight path, the least complex solution to any problem. That which is the least complex is Unity. When there is only One, there is nothing simpler. The concept of unity can solve any problem.

Simplicity also offers peace to one who does not seek after great material possession, or lofty goals. This is not to say, however, that one should own nothing, or accomplish nothing.

It's okay to obsess over something if you are just trying to get it done. It's when you convince yourself that there are a lot of things that need to be done that you run into trouble. Most of the time, things that we think we *have* to do, are really just things we *want* to do, and desire is the source of all suffering.

## CHAPTER 3: Spreading your Knowledge

All Jedi, at some point or another, will or should become a teacher. It is a Jedi's duty to pass on what they have learned, thus to propagate the wisdom around the world, thereby helping the world improve itself. To refuse to teach is a



selfish mindset that leads to the dark side. All knowledge, and all wisdom, should be shared.

Teaching does, however, take a lot of faith. Faith in yourself, faith in your student, faith in the Force. When you can get past your doubts and truly believe that the Force will guide you to do what is necessary to pass on knowledge, you'll be ready. Being capable is irrelevant, because the Force can do anything. If you trust in it, you will be capable.

An important part of that trust is believing that you can be questioned by someone, and receive the answer through the Force. My experiences have shown me that I don't need to already know all the answers. In fact, I often don't have anything to say until someone asks me a question or brings up a topic. Then it's like a switch in my mind turns on and the answer just comes out, though it usually takes time.

Now, I realize that not everyone can do this, and it took me years of practice for it to become natural. My point is that you don't have to worry about having a lot to learn yourself. Students are teachers and teachers are students. Often the best way to learn something is to teach it. Force yourself to come up with the answer. Be the expert. When you look within yourself for the answer, instead of outside sources, you'll find that the Force provides you with everything you want to know.

Often times we teach what we ourselves need to learn. This is how the student can be seen as the teacher. A student asks a question, and you look within for the answer. Doing this allows you to find the wisdom that you always have access to through the Force. So, teaching something you don't practice may be hypocritical, but it is often a necessary step in learning.

In a sense then it is not really hypocrisy if you are learning a lesson at the same time that you are teaching it. This is something I do often. Even at this very moment I am learning too. I am allowing myself to be guided by the Force. I didn't have this book rehearsed in my mind. Instead I'm just going with the flow, finding the words as I go along.

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Knowing the difference between a master and an apprentice is important. They have very different mindsets. The beginner learns more and more, while the expert knows less and less. Being an apprentice is about accumulation, while being a master is about letting go. On your path as a Jedi, you start by gaining knowledge, but as you progress that knowledge is no longer needed because it has become a part of you, second nature, and you won't need the words anymore. Knowledge becomes knowing. Information becomes wisdom.

So, I have an exercise for you. When you're done reading this chapter, if you have a question, imagine someone else asking you that same question. Put yourself in the role of the teacher, write it down, and answer the question.

Take your time. The answer might not come right away. Give yourself over to the Force.

CHAPTER 4: Enlightenment

Enlightenment is a realization, not an action. It cannot be achieved, it can only be seen as one's true nature.

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Most Westerners believe that enlightenment is some lofty goal that the Easterners seek to achieve. Along with that belief comes the assumption that there is a process or some sort of action we must undertake, or some particular place you need to be, in order to reach it. This is incorrect.

The only enlightenment you find at the top of the mountain is the enlightenment you bring with you. Enlightenment is not a result of action, but a result of realization. There is nothing you can do to become enlightened, you can only realize that you already are.

To put effort into becoming enlightened pushes it further away from you, as the thought of becoming enlightened gives rise to the thought that you are *not* enlightened. The way around this is to let go of effort. "Try not...There is no try", in other words.

"The sage does little, but leaves nothing undone."

—Lao Tzu  
(The Tao Teh Ching)

Notice the paradox. By doing less, by releasing the pressure you create for yourself, you achieve something even greater: inner peace. Sometimes it is actually necessary to give up. You don't always have to fight. By letting go of one thing, you gain something else. Yet, the something else you gain has no substance. It does not take up room in your mind. It is enlightenment. That is, you are "enlightened", or "lighter", with less weight. As Christ said, "The truth will set you free."

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Truth is a very elusive topic. As spiritually minded people, we tend to always be in the pursuit of truth. Who or what are we? What is our potential? What is the Force? What is God? While our questions may differ from those of other ways of life, our similarities, no matter what religion we follow, lie in the fact that we ask questions, that we seek meaning in the intangible, that we seek truth.

Unfortunately, the Force is only one in a billion different beliefs, and so we cannot claim—as some have—that our ways are the only true way. Jedi philosophies and those who follow them should not only be completely open to others' perspectives, but also open to the idea that we may be wrong.

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It's been said, by New Age thinkers and preachers alike, that we are fighting a spiritual war. In a sense, I believe we are, but for all the wrong reasons.

Christian hymns speak of the necessity to "enlist" as a soldier for Christ (which is obviously just a metaphor, as there is no real physical battle involved with being a Christian). The trend is clear, that most religious people believe they are fighting for their beliefs, fighting for their truth to be spread around the world. Christians are probably the best example of this, given their history in missionary work all over the Earth.

But honestly, why is this battle being waged? It seems to stem from one idea: "my way is right, and your way is wrong". Islamic extremists have proven, through the destruction of the World Trade Center, what this way of thinking can lead to. A disagreement of religion has transformed into an actual war involving the military of multiple countries.

So I ask a question: who is right? Which religion, which way of life, is correct? Are any? Perhaps we all have a small piece of the puzzle, and if we put each piece together we'll gain a clearer picture of the divine.

My point is simply this: there need not be any battle, any war. We need not be knights or soldiers. What it comes down to is faith. If you believe in the reconciliation of these diverse beliefs, then there is no battle to be fought.

It is already won.

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He that has knowledge spares his words:
and a man of understanding is of an
excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holds his peace,
is counted wise: and he that
shuts his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

—King Solomon
(The Bible: Proverbs 17:27-28)

He who knows, does not speak. He who speaks, does not know.

—Lao Tzu, (
The Tao Teh Ching)

Because there is no fight to win, no enlightenment to seek, there is nothing to teach. A very ancient philosophy that indicates wisdom is the simple concept of silence. As you see from the above quotes, a wise person is one who talks little

about what he or she knows. One who is never quiet, who spouts his truths without ceasing is believed to be a fool. Why is this?

To teach and to make your knowledge available is one thing, but to force your knowledge onto others is to push them away from you. It's somewhat like the difference between a pond and a fire hose. The pond is still, and waits for the thirsty to come to it, while a person with a fire hose does more harm than good, spraying people down who may or may not want to get wet.

It is also a matter of patience. The impatient, often the student, will preach to those who have not volunteered for it, while the Master waits patiently for those who seek wisdom to come to him or her.

The Force is not easy to talk about. It is meant to be observed in silence. Hold your peace, spare your words, and you will know wisdom, and be known as wise.

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"The Mythology of Star Wars." The title of the PBS show scrolled up onto my television screen on the TV Guide channel much like the opening to Star Wars itself. I immediately flipped to the channel and was rewarded with the smiling face of George Lucas. I had unfortunately missed most of the show, but after listening to the conversation with the interviewer, something caught my attention. They began talking about "a leap of faith". Mr. Lucas added by saying, "Well, that's what 'Use the Force' really means, to take that leap of faith",

At the end of Star Wars, Luke Skywalker receives a message from Obi-Wan Kenobi to "use the Force". But what did this really mean? Like most people, I assumed this meant that he let the Force flow through him and guide his actions. However, I've found this to not be the whole truth. Luke was in essence taking a leap of faith. To trust in himself that he could do what the Rebellion was counting on him to do, and what a computer could not do.

Once in a while, turn off your targeting computer and take a leap of faith.

Remember one thing: there is nothing you need to do to be a Jedi (or a Buddha, or enlightened, or saved, or any other spiritual "achievement"). The importance lies in who we are, not what we do. We, all of us, are already one with the Force. This is It. This is all there is. You need only open your eyes to it.

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To be rid of duality, to leave your preferences behind, is to be at peace. It is, however, impossible to be rid of duality by your own effort, because to put effort into it, you are creating a preference, a duality in itself, and therefore you are further from your goal than before.

Enlightenment, therefore, comes when you are able to let go, and also to let go of letting go. Most fall into the endless struggle to accomplish this, when all that is needed is nothing at all.

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Spirituality is meant to make you free. Any spiritual endeavor, or religion, that makes you a slave has lost its original nature. Being free, however, does not always feel good. Often we feel that we're on our own, even empty. Such emptiness is not a lack of emotion, but rather a sense of being able to do anything, that it doesn't matter what path we choose, that whatever choice we make is the right one, as long as it matters to us.

To achieve freedom, one must let go of expectation: that which we feel is expected of us. Those expectations often consist of a need to be the best we can be, to always do the right thing. Now, there is nothing wrong with greatness or doing the right thing, but freedom comes when, instead of being the best, we settle for being who we are. Often, we feel that who we are is not perfect, so we strive for more, and are never satisfied. Thus we suffer and sometimes hate who we are.

This hate is a snare from which freedom becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. It is important then, as I stated above, to let go of expectation from the start. Who you are is perfect. Our imperfections are what make us perfect, because there is purpose behind everything thing we are and do. It is unnecessary then to strive for anything greater. Such striving creates conflict. To no longer strive is to be free.

The presumption that using the Force is "hard" in any way is a mistake.

"There is no try". In other words, have no effort.

The Force should set you free. It asks nothing of you, and yet with the right amount of faith, anything can be done through it.

## CHAPTER 5: Martial Arts

Being a Jedi is not just about thinking high-minded thoughts and meditation. It is about protection, of yourself, and those around you, which means learning the martial arts.

As for myself, I trained in Tae Kwon Do and Jeet Kune Do, the latter of which was created by Bruce Lee and I believe to be a superior way of thinking and defense, as it uses a mix of other various martial arts, absorbing what is useful from them and rejecting the rest.

Along with some very interesting ways to defend yourself, there is a greater philosophical side to Jeet Kune Do.

### **\* The Direct Line**

In JKD, Bruce Lee placed great emphasis on the directness of self-defense. He did not support the fancy movements that did nothing more than put on a good show. The stuff you see in the movies can be quite misleading. When your life is your concern, you have no time to think about a certain defensive maneuver. You have to act. Which is why, if you study martial arts for the sake of self-defense, you should learn to flow with the situation. Accept what your opponent gives you, and allow the Force to react. Do not conform to 'fixedness'. The shortest distance

to any location is a straight line. The simpler the movement, the faster the action, the sooner the fight will be over.

\* **Pristine Simplicity**

Martial Arts can indeed seem complicated at times. This is something you should work to prevent. When defending one's self, do not allow your mind to freeze. Do not focus on yourself, or worry about self-preservation. Do not fight against these, however. Simply let go. There is no 'I'. There is no 'opponent'. That is when Martial Arts reaches its highest meaning.

\* **The Connection to Art**

Art is that which you feel, that which you know, and that which you understand from within. Art is then the outward creation of what you have within you. It is the spiritual and conceptual place in the physical world. Do not confine yourself to that which is not an expression from within.

\* **See the Truth**

Allow your mind to empty of such concepts of good or bad. Easy or difficult. Correct or incorrect. Doing so will allow you to see everything as it is, without the mind's influence. This is your soul telling you the truth.

"It hits all by it self"

—Bruce Lee

To adapt is to flow with the moment, to allow events to unfold without the desire to alter the course of those events. One who can adapt is not surprised easily, and does not react negatively when an unexpected or unfortunate event occurs. Instead, allow the moment to pass over and through you, like a river that cannot be slowed or stopped. By doing so you are freeing yourself from slavery to your emotions.

You have a choice. You can react negatively, or you can pass through the event. You can flow with the moment instead of clinging to a reality that no longer exists. From Zen, it's about transcending duality, moving beyond the ideas of good and bad, and just accepting whatever comes. It provides peace.

The next time something happens that you don't like, keep flowing and accept it. The Now is always changing. Past and future are illusions. Forget everything but what Is Now.

Martial arts can be applied to everyday life. The interesting thing is that Bruce Lee created Jeet Kune Do from the standpoint of philosophy. It started as an idea. The idea of adaptability. Or perhaps more importantly, the idea of freedom —“honestly expressing oneself” as he put it. We all have different ways of doing things, different ways of being who we are.

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In a sense, by accepting our own limitations, we are freed from limitation. That seems a contradiction, but I think of it more as a paradox. By being yourself, you are freed from the desire of being something you're not. Not everyone is cut out for martial arts, but that doesn't mean you can't study it. Martial arts have a

deep resonance with the soul. Even if you are the shy, non-physically active, introverted type, you can still learn something from martial arts.

What you do is not nearly as important as who you are. When you focus on Being, what you do becomes natural and free flowing, and you don't have to think about it as much. You spend less time analyzing your actions.

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All Masters teach their apprentices in one way or another how to breath properly. It is believed that there is a mysterious power in breathing. Allowing yourself to breath regularly, and deeply, can do more than just provide oxygen.

Start by either lying down or sitting comfortably. You may want to wear loose fitting clothes. This helps you to let go of your physical self.

Now, take a few deep breaths, and begin by inhaling for 4 seconds. Hold your breath for 4, exhale for 4, and hold again for 4. If this is your first time doing this, you may find it difficult to hold your breath after exhaling, so gradually work that in, until your breath is on a count of 4-4-4-4 all the way through.

When Inhaling, allow your stomach to expand before your chest. When exhaling, do just the opposite. Make sure you fill your lungs completely, but not to the point where it begins to hurt.

Close your eyes. If you've ever had difficulty meditating, using this breathing technique will allow you to focus. After some time and practice, you will actually forget to count, and the breathing will become natural.

If you start to get dizzy or short of breath, make sure to change the length of time during one of the 4 second counts. It's all about practice.

This can be applied as well if you ever become overwhelmed, or even afraid. Regulating your breathing is like allowing the Force to flow through you regularly.

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A common misconception about meditation is that you have to accomplish something. Meditation is about doing nothing, letting go of effort. We know from Yoda that "There is no try". When you meditate, simply let go. Stop trying. Even let go of letting go. Then no noise can bother you, nothing can distract you because there is nothing to be distracted from. That is the nature of Zen. Whether your mind is cluttered or uncluttered doesn't matter.

Enlightenment is not a goal to be accomplished, it is a state of being to be realized. What I mean is that there is nothing you can do to become enlightened, you can only see that you already are. What that means for you is that you need not do anything to meditate "successfully". The more you resist the things that distract you, the more they will distract you. You need to accept whatever is on your mind, or whatever you hear or see or feel. Only then will you be free of them.

CHAPTER 6: Concepts

There are many ways to look at time. One of them is to say it is a measure

of distance. Time measures how long it takes for something to get from point A to point B. However, we know that point A and B are connected. The Force is a part of A as much as B, and even the space between them. Therefore, if I move from point A to B, and the Force is both A and B, and the space between, then what has moved? Can we say that the Force moved from the Force, to the Force, through the Force? Or did it simply stay where it was?

The Force is both the beginning and the end.

If nothing has moved, then time becomes meaningless. So you could say that time doesn't exist. Or rather that it is simply a tool we use to experience life one moment at a time.

It is this concept that can allow us to have infinite patience. If time does not exist, or if it does exist and is simply a creation of our mind, then there is no such thing as waiting.

"Be so utterly, so completely present that no problem,
no suffering, nothing that is not who you are in your essence,
can survive in you. In the Now, in the absence of time,
all your problems dissolve. Suffering needs time;
it cannot survive in the Now."

— Eckhart Tolle

(The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual

Enlightenment)

Past, Present and Future pass in an instant. The time needed to separate the 3 moments in time could be as little as .00000000001 seconds, or less. Indeed, it could be infinitely smaller. Thus, Past, Present, and Future are so close together so as to be indistinguishable.

Whether or not time exists is not as important as the knowledge that we are one, that even past, present, and future are one. Believing in this unity frees us from the chains that the idea of separation creates.

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"Being and non-being give birth to each other".

—Lao Tzu

(*Tao Teh Ching*)

This is an important concept. Being and non-being are symbolized in Yin and Yang (good/bad, right/wrong, up/down, etc.). What this means is that the This and the That came into being at the same time. You cannot have good without bad, for one defines the other. To have only good without bad to define it, good would have no meaning to us.

As for what this means about God, try to imagine what reality was before the universe was born. There was no separation. Even scientists believe the universe was once a singularity before the Big Bang. You and I, here and there, this and that... such concepts did not exist. There was possibly only God who



could not see or experience itself. Upon the birth of the universe, however, the illusion of separation was created (being and non-being gave birth to each other), and then we could see each other, live with one another, know others outside of ourselves in order to experience reality. In other words, God could know God, existing within all of us. We're like a universe full of mirrors, reflecting everyone back at themselves for the sake of knowing life, and knowing God.

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The middle path is the path of moderation, the path of balance.

To achieve balance in one's life it is necessary to avoid extremes. Avoiding extremes means knowing when to cease an activity before that activity becomes its opposite. Extreme action and energy leads to extreme inaction and tiredness. Extreme hunger leads to extreme fullness. To be spiritually balanced, then, seek moderation. This is what is called balance of yin and yang. When you only have a little of everything, you never have the negative experience of having too much.

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The valley spirit never dies --  
it is called "the mysterious female";  
The gate of the mysterious female  
is called "the root of heaven and earth."  
Gossamer it is,  
seemingly insubstantial,  
yet never consumed through use.

Chapter 6 of the Tao Teh Ching is an interesting one. The trick to understanding it is in the symbolism. The valley represents humility in Taoism. The Tao is humble. It has no substance of its own. Which is why it's called Gossamer (or Vapor in other translations). It is emptiness, but useful, like the empty space in a pot. It's the emptiness that makes it useful. This emptiness allows it to be everywhere, because it doesn't take up any space.

The Mysterious Female it speaks of is the receptive nature of the Tao. Everything was born out of nothingness. The Tao is the nothingness out of which everything was born. Another translation goes: "It is called the Great Mother because it gives birth to Heaven and Earth."

The purpose of this chapter is to gain an understanding of the nature of the Tao: humble, empty, receptive, infinite, powerful. It is the beginning and end. Alpha and Omega. There's really very little difference between God and Tao. If you unite the two, you'll have a better understanding of life than either philosophy can provide on its own.

Also in the Tao Teh Ching:

"We shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness  
inside that holds whatever we want."

And Leonardo DaVinci:

"Among the great things which are to be found  
among us, the Being of Nothingness is the greatest."

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"Pain can be a drug."

"For myself, I say that pain is itself a god: the taskmaster of life. Pain cracks the whip and all that lives will move. The most basic instinct of life is to retreat from pain. To hide from it. If going here hurts, even a granite slug will go over there; to live is to be a slave to pain. To be 'beyond pain' is to be dead, yes?"

"No lesson is truly learned until it has been purchased with pain."

—Vergere
(Traitor)

"Suffering is the fuel in the engine of civilization.

Now he begins to understand: because pain is a god...But it is also a teacher, and a bridge. It can be a slave master, and break you—and it can be the power that makes you unbreakable. It is all these things, and more.

At the same time.

What it is depends on who you are."

(Traitor)

When you fully accept your pain, it no longer has control. It seems like a contradiction, but it's more of a paradox. The more you fight it, the stronger it becomes. The more attention you give it, the more real it becomes. The point then is just not to fight to ignore a problem, but to face it, and accept it. That's when the real healing starts.

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Everything is as it was meant to be. Perhaps it is our will that our lives are predestined. Perhaps it is destiny that we have free will.

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It is a very difficult challenge to get out of our own way. We tend to think that the harder we try, the more effort we put into an action, the more likely we are to succeed. This is usually not the case. What is necessary for spiritual growth is to let go entirely, to allow the Force to act through us. This is called having "no mind".

What eastern philosophy teaches about striving is meant to show us that if we place our total trust in the Force, things will happen through us, be done

through us. Bruce Lee, in reference to martial arts, said, "It hits all by itself." That doesn't mean we don't do anything anymore, but rather that we let go of conscious control, and "It" just happens. Even our greatest dreams no longer take any effort. We can still have goals and hopes, but they no longer have to be something we do alone. We act, then, in conjunction with the universe.

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The great mystery lies in the synchronicity of the events that lead from your needs to the fulfillment of those needs. These events occur all the time, but most people don't notice, or they just call it coincidence. We need to be more aware of them though, because it is in those so-called coincidences that we can learn to be in awe of the universe in general.

Coincidences are important, and should be acknowledged when they occur, as they usually have a deeper meaning.

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Learning what you aren't greatly helps you to understand what you are.

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Love is the fuel on which you can be sustained, while hate consumes you as if you were the fuel by which it is sustained.

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To experience emptiness, one must be beyond Yin and Yang, beyond this or that, good or bad, etc. To be beyond Yin and Yang, it is important to practice moderation, never reaching extremes.

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First hand observation is 1000 times better than reading about it. In other words, a picture is worth a thousand words. Usually people misinterpret that. It simply means that you can talk and talk and talk about something, but actually seeing it is more effective than all that talk.

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The better you know your enemy, the better you know yourself.
To know that which is not you, is to know that which is you.

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Failure is not really failure in the sense that we define it, because failure provides you with information on how not to do something, which only brings you closer to success. Embrace the pain that is involved with failure and you can be

free of it.

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Detachment is achieved when you are willing to accept whatever life gives you. This is what is called "flowing with what is". I used to illustrate this concept by having the apprentice imagine a leaf floating on a stream. The leaf has no choice but to keep flowing with the stream, no matter what direction it goes in. Unlike the leaf, however, we have the choice of whether to follow the flow, or to resist it. When we resist it, that's when we create conflict, and conflict leads to suffering. Following the flow leads to synchronicity, and harmony.

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Being miserable once in a while helps you appreciate the times that you're not miserable. Without those times of misfortune, we would take the fortune we have for granted.

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Often times when people look at a situation, they see it in black and white, one or the other, either/or. Most of the time, however, especially philosophically, the answer lies in both sides.

The best example is in how we view the divine. Is it a God? Is it an energy field? Most Jedi will try to philosophize an answer, giving reasons why they think it's one or the other. But I believe it is both, and even much more than that. Alternative options become apparent when you see a situation from other angles, outside of the either/or "box".

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Religion, as it was originally created, was meant to liberate people. It is supposed to make us free. The Jedi Way grants us that freedom. It asks nothing of us beyond what we are willing to volunteer. In fact, our knowledge that the Force unites us all is what grants us the ability to help others, as what we do to others ultimately happens to us.

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Your life does not have to revolve around doing things you "have" to do and avoiding what you want. You should hold onto a vision of life as you want it to be. Envision a higher self, and focus on that ("Your focus determines your reality"). You most certainly will have to do things you don't want to do in life, but holding on to an idea of who, what, and where you want to be will not only give you hope, but can detach you from your present suffering.

CHAPTER 7: The Path

The Jedi Way is not restricted to the concepts and ideas that I've just provided. They are simply from my personal perspective as a Jedi in the world. There is so much more to learn (or should I say unlearn), but it must be done on your own (that is, you must find a teacher), and the Jedi experience is different for everyone.

Know this: the Force is with you, right now. The fact that you came upon this book should be a testament to that. If you have the faith, will, and focus, you too can become a Jedi. It is a difficult path to follow, I won't lie. Should you choose to admit openly that you are seeking to become a Jedi, you will likely face ridicule. That's the price you pay. If, instead, you choose to keep it a secret, that's okay too. You can still help others and progress spiritually whether others know of it or not.

Yes, the Force is with you, as it has been all your life, as it forever will be.